



Ministry of Housing,  
Communities &  
Local Government



# Integrated Communities Innovation Fund

July 2018





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# Introduction

Britain is a great place to live and we are a well-integrated society on the whole. However, in too many parts of our country communities are divided. This reduces opportunities for people to mix with others from different backgrounds, allows mistrust and misunderstanding to grow, and can prevent people in isolated communities from taking advantage of the opportunities that living in Britain offers.

Launched in March 2018, the Integrated Communities Strategy Green Paper<sup>1</sup> invites views on the government's vision for building strong integrated communities where people – whatever their background – live, work, learn and socialise together, based on shared rights, responsibilities and opportunities.

The Green Paper commits to establishing a new Integrated Communities Innovation Fund, to stimulate new thinking, build new partnerships and test innovative approaches so we can build understanding of what works. Evidence of the effectiveness of new ways of tackling the barriers to integration will be valuable to central and local government and many other providers and commissioners of services.

In addition to backing approaches which have already been proven to work, we need to do more to support innovative approaches that may work in one context but could be successfully applied in others or are entirely new ideas which need to be tested. Through the new Integrated Communities Innovation Fund we hope to discover and support such approaches, helping to improve our collective understanding of what works in building integrated communities.

To date, evidence about what works systematically to boost integration has been patchy, of variable quality and not easily accessible to the people who need it. To gather and disseminate evidence of what works, we are taking a number of steps. These include supporting the five new Integration Areas announced in the Green Paper - Blackburn with Darwen, Bradford, Peterborough, Walsall and Waltham Forest - to work with us to gather new and better evidence and share lessons widely.

Launched in November 2016, the Controlling Migration Fund (CMF) continues to support local authorities to ease service pressures impacted by recent migration. This bottom-up approach has widened our understanding of how migration affects communities across England and this has helped to develop the Green Paper's proposals to support new migrants and resident communities. The new Integrated Communities Innovation Fund will complement our Integration Area Programme and the CMF by inviting organisations across the country to come forward with innovative ideas to encourage integration.

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<sup>1</sup>HM Government (2018). Integrated Communities Strategy Green Paper. Available from: [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/696993/Integrated\\_Communities\\_Strategy.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/696993/Integrated_Communities_Strategy.pdf)

We will be encouraging better knowledge exchange, so that any new evidence will be accessible and available to practitioners, policy makers and communities, enabling them to build on existing successes. Over the coming months we will be working with partners to identify the most effective ways for us to share knowledge of what works, including supporting the new Cohesion and Integration Network. This network will bring organisations and individuals from across sectors together - to share their ideas, knowledge and experience to work more effectively. Individuals and organisations involved in this vital work will have access to guidance and resources – from the theory of integration to the practice of measuring integration and ‘what works’.

Through this prospectus we are inviting applications to support approaches which address the breadth of factors which can lead to poor integration - these include the level and pace of migration, labour market disadvantage, residential segregation and segregation in schools, a lack of meaningful social mixing and certain religious and cultural values and attitudes.

The government’s ‘Sporting Future: A New Strategy for an Active Nation’ published in 2015, looks beyond simple participation to how sport changes lives and becomes a force for social good. One of the five outcomes specified in this strategy is community development. Taking its lead from *‘Sporting Future’*, Sport England’s Strategy ‘Towards an Active Nation 2016-2021’ aims to increase the number of people who engage in sport and activity for the wider benefits it can bring. We are very pleased to be working in partnership with Sport England, which is contributing to the new Integrated Communities Innovation Fund, to support projects that use sport and physical activity to encourage integration.

### Loneliness

In January 2018 the government accepted recommendations from the Jo Cox commission to tackle loneliness. As a part of this work it will launch a cross government fund to enable a positive shift in social relationships and add to the learning on what works in tackling loneliness. Further information will be published on Gov.uk. The primary purpose of the Integrated Communities Innovation Fund is to support innovative integration approaches. These approaches may also help to reduce or prevent loneliness, adding to the wider evidence base on tackling this issue.

## What this guide provides

In partnership with Sport England, the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) is launching a call for applications to the new Integrated Communities Innovation Fund, the first stage of which invites short expressions of interest.

This prospectus provides details of the aims of the new Integrated Communities Innovation Fund, what kind of approaches we are looking to support, and how you can apply. It also includes details of the funding available and guidance on how to submit an expression of interest.

# The application process

Application for funding from the Integrated Communities Innovation Fund is a two-stage process.

Stage one requires applicants to submit an expression of interest by **23:45 Monday 20<sup>th</sup> August** using the **Expression of interest form** provided alongside this prospectus.

*Please note that we cannot offer applicants funding to help cover the costs of the application process.*

Following this, applicants whose expressions of interest have been shortlisted will be asked to submit a full application at stage two.

Your expression of interest will be assessed by a panel convened by the Integration and Communities Directorate of MHCLG. Where applications focus on sport and physical activity, the panel will be jointly convened by MHCLG and Sport England.

The details of the criteria against which expressions of interest will be assessed are provided in the **assessment criteria** document provided alongside this prospectus.

We hope to provide a reply no later than 6 weeks after the submission deadline. We will notify applicants should there be any changes to this timescale.

We may ask for additional information to support your expression of interest.

If your expression of interest meets the criteria to progress to stage two we will ask you to submit a full application. Shortlisted applicants will be given further guidance on how to submit a full application. The full application will ask for further details of the organisations applying for funding, and a breakdown of all government funding received by these organisations in the last 2 years. We will also want to see a detailed project proposal which must include a logic model and lab testing or other evidence to support the application. A detailed breakdown of funding requirements and assurances of financial sustainability (for those projects running beyond 2019/20) will also be required.

You will have 4 more weeks to submit a full application from the point at which you are notified, so you may want to begin thinking now about the detail and evidence you could use to support your application.

## What we are looking for

The Integrated Communities Strategy Green Paper focuses on addressing those factors which the available evidence suggests act as the main drivers for poor integration. They include:



We recognise that those drivers are not uniform throughout the country – the interplay of demographics; patterns of migration, physical geography; industrial history and local economy in each place make for a unique set of challenges.

We want to support the best ideas for addressing integration challenges which will often be those approaches that are likely to prove successful across a wide range of different local contexts.

We believe that organisations that work closely with communities must be bold and innovative in order to tackle some of the most persistent and systemic integration challenges, taking an evidence-based approach, based on local needs.

Through the new Fund we want to support different types and scales of projects to encourage integration. Innovative projects could, for example, involve small-scale but impactful changes to existing services accessed by a large number of participants. Projects like these may require relatively small amounts of funding per person reached, but may be significant in the positive outcomes they achieve. Other more intensive approaches may involve projects which require more substantial funding because they are testing an intensive and transformational approach. All applicants will be required to show evidence of how their projects are likely to achieve effective integration.

We are interested in supporting projects that can be scaled up to reach a minimum of 300 participants, within the funded period. We recognise that it is unlikely that all the projects we may want to support can reach those levels from the outset. This number of participants is based on our learning from bodies which have successfully evaluated similar types of approaches before. Our aim is to be able to determine a causal link between the approaches used and improved integration outcomes. This can be difficult to demonstrate with any degree of certainty where the number of participants is very small.

In summary, we want to support projects that:

- Are innovative in how they tackle systemic integration challenges, including experimentation in the design of new approaches.
- Offer sound reasoning as to why they will be likely to achieve positive integration outcomes and, where available, have a clear evidence base to support this.
- Have a clear understanding of how outcomes will be measured and how the success of the project can be evaluated.
- Demonstrate how they have, or will secure, buy-in to the proposal from delivery partners and from the local communities in which they will be tested.
- Show potential for growth, both in terms of the number of people reached and effectiveness in different local contexts.
- Demonstrate clear deliverability, good value for money and are financially sustainable.
- Are led by organisations that are willing to share their experiences and learning, both honestly and widely.

## Evaluating Outcomes

We are committed to ensuring that projects supported through the new Fund are evaluated in a consistent way, so that we can robustly and transparently measure the positive integration outcomes they achieve.

MHCLG will first commission a feasibility study to see how we can best ensure consistent and rigorous evaluation of approaches supported by the Fund. This study will inform a subsequent evaluation strategy to examine the success of the Fund overall, including the innovation, reach and outcomes of the projects the Fund supports, along with their value for money, potential for growth and transferability. Applicants are therefore asked to think deeply about how the success of their project might be measured and how they can build in sound principles of evaluation from the outset. Subject to the feasibility study, it is likely that successful applicants will be required to work closely with an independent evaluator selected by MHCLG. Dependent on the nature of the project this could include being open to a full externally-led evaluation, or undertaking evaluation in adherence with methodology agreed and overseen by the independent evaluator.

This will require a clear and fixed delivery period, to allow measurement to be collected before and after the lifetime of the project.

Therefore, we expect projects to be up and running shortly after notification of a successful application to the Fund. Projects must have completed delivery by early 2020 in order to allow sufficient time for the independent evaluation to conclude.

The findings from the evaluation will help inform future approaches to encouraging integration and will be disseminated widely across central and local government and other sectors, including through the new Cohesion and Integration Network, referenced earlier in this prospectus.

## Innovation

**The Integrated Communities Innovation Fund is about stimulating new thinking, building new partnerships and testing innovative approaches.** We want to support projects that will enthuse and inspire others to adopt similar approaches more widely, with the confidence that comes from knowing they have been robustly evaluated and found to be successful.

What will distinguish between a good proposal and the strongest proposals is a clear and credible hypothesis about how the project will address the stated integration challenges with a clear articulation of the outcomes that will be achieved. We want to see proposals come forward that seek to address some of the most difficult challenges, are deliverable and demonstrate a strong likelihood of being able to achieve ambitious outcomes.

We purposefully want to encourage applicants to come forward with a wide range of different types of approach. These could be in the form of novel ideas which may be based on sound academic theory but which have yet to be tested in real world situations. Alternatively, some projects may seek to use digital technology including social media, to implement ideas in a more efficient and engaging way. Projects may also involve adapting existing interventions that have been successful in addressing challenges other than integration (for example, public health), but might be applied to that goal.

Innovative projects might also include expanding an approach which has shown strong potential but only at a very small scale or making impactful changes to the way existing services are delivered, either through one large change or a number of smaller changes.

## Partnering and collaboration

When seeking to stimulate genuine innovation in tackling poor integration, there are benefits in bringing together the skills, knowledge and experience of a range of different organisations. The size and type of partnerships may vary widely depending on the nature of the approach.

This does not mean that we will only consider applications submitted by partnerships, but, as with all applications, we will need persuasive evidence that they can achieve the positive integration outcomes we are looking for and the buy-in of beneficiaries has been, or will be, secured.

## Sustainability

The Integrated Communities Innovation Fund will offer funding in financial years 2018/19 and 2019/20. We are encouraging applicants to submit proposals for projects that can be up and running shortly after notification of a successful application to the Fund, and will have completed delivery by early 2020, in order to allow sufficient time for the independent evaluation mentioned above.

Funding is only available until the end of 2019/20. Projects which seek to run beyond 2019/20 must provide assurances of their financial sustainability without funding from the Integrated Communities Innovation Fund. Owners of shortlisted proposals will be asked to provide this information at stage two, when applicants will be asked to complete a full application.

## Eligibility criteria

The government will be investing in supporting the proposals set out in the Integrated Communities Strategy Green Paper over the next two years. This includes English language support through a new Integrated Communities English Language programme and the next phase of the Controlling Migration Fund. We are also developing a new infrastructure fund which will help local authorities improve the offer for English language learners in their areas.

Given these opportunities, we will not fund projects which involve English language as their primary outcome, such as ESOL provision. Innovative proposals that involve English language support as a secondary outcome, (for example, projects which bring people together through social action, cultural or sport activity but also include opportunities for participants to improve their English) are eligible for funding.

The Integrated Communities Innovation Fund is open to applications from a wide range of organisations. We are willing to support proposals that meet the following eligibility criteria:

- Organisations must be legally constituted organisations or have statutory powers. Individuals, sole traders and limited liability partnerships are not eligible. Organisations formed within the last two years are also not eligible for funding.
- Organisations must have a registered bank account in the name of the organisation, and they must be able to demonstrate fair and transparent governance arrangements.
- Organisations working with children or vulnerable adults will need to demonstrate appropriate safeguarding policies, as part of stage two of the application process.

Applicants will be required to disclose information of all government funding received and applied for in the last 2 years as part of stage two. This includes funding received for other projects and purposes.

Applicants should note that the Innovation Fund is not available to extend projects which MHCLG is already funding, either in full or in part.

Beneficiaries of projects must be based in England. Projects must not be for the promotion of religious beliefs.

As indicated earlier, approaches must be capable of being delivered to a minimum of 300 participants within the period of funding. Applicants must be willing to take part in an independent evaluation of their projects. Successful applicants will be required to work closely with independent evaluators appointed by MHCLG to ensure evaluation is completed thoroughly and by the end of 2019/20. This evaluation will examine the success of the fund, including the innovation, reach and outcomes of the interventions, and their value for money and transferability to other settings.

Applicants seeking funding for sport-based integration projects, must meet the requirements set out within 'A Code for Sports Governance' relevant to the level of investment. Sport England will only provide funding to for-profit organisations if they can ensure the project is not for personal or shareholder gain and addresses a need not met by the non-profit sector.

Sport-based integration projects must be focused on sports which are recognised by Sport England (see here), be aligned with Sport England's strategic aims and must not have already started. For further information see Active Nation | Sport England.

## What we will fund

There is no minimum or maximum amount of funding for which applicants can apply; however the value for money the project offers will be one of the criteria used to assess full applications, as part of stage two.

Funding is only available for 2018/19 and 2019/20. For projects that run beyond 2019/20, applicants will be required to secure alternate means of funding. Successful applicants will be required to enter into a Grant Funding Agreement with MHCLG (and where relevant Sport England), which will set out the expectations of both the applicant and ourselves.

**We will provide funding for delivery of the agreed-upon project only.** The project will be agreed upon following approval of a full application at stage two and discussions between the applicant and independent evaluator. This funding will cover costs such as payment to administrators supporting the projects and volunteer expenses, for example.

Funding cannot be used for anything other than the delivery of the approach identified by applicants; delivery does not include organisational salaries, PR, marketing and related events organised by the applicant.

**All funding from the department is revenue funding only; it may not be spent on capital items (e.g. property and fixed assets).**

We will not fund contingency costs, loans, endowments of interest payments and recoverable VAT.

Please note, for sport-based integration projects, costs must be project specific and additional to existing expenditure. Equipment up to the value of £10k will be deemed revenue expenditure. Sport England can fund equipment as stand-alone expenditure; this is assessed as the input to achieve the aims of the projects, rather than the aims themselves. They will also not fund personal equipment and clothing, as well as replacement items, but may fund upgrades of equipment.

**Funding for evaluation of the project will be dependent on the approach on a project by project basis.** Where projects are subject to a full independent evaluation, this will be paid for by the MHCLG. Where conducted by the project but agreed and overseen by the independent evaluator funding may be provided to the project for this purpose.

## Guidance for expressions of interest

Expressions of interest for the Integrated Communities Innovation Fund should provide a brief outline of both the lead organisation and partner organisations (where relevant) and the project you wish the Fund to support. You must submit your expression of interest by **23:45 Monday 20<sup>th</sup> August**.

By asking for expressions of interest we hope to ensure that full applications are only submitted by eligible applicants for approaches which have the greatest potential in demonstrating innovation.

To submit your expression of interest please use the **expression of interest form** provided alongside this prospectus, which also includes details of how to submit this to MHCLG.